

Characteristics of the Hereafter

Describing the Realm after Death

Understanding the Characteristics of the Hereafter Using the Law of Proportion

Through the desire for infinity, the law of measures, and signs within our soul, we have concluded that the realm of the hereafter must exist. But now the question is: How is it possible for us, who have never seen or experienced the realm after this life, to understand the characteristics of the hereafter?

Perhaps one of the things we avoid is explaining a concept to young children. Due to their limited knowledge, experience, and information, children are unaware of the existence of many things or do not have the necessary background information about them. For this reason, we typically use similes and comparisons to explain something to children, while this approach is not exclusive to children. Actually, in this regard, we are just like the child who lacks the necessary background information about the subject, and we have no way but to use similes and comparisons to understand the characteristics of the hereafter.

We use our intellect to understand things, but since our intellect has limitations, we cannot understand non-material affairs. In reality, the nature of immaterial affairs is such that our intellect cannot fully comprehend all their angles and dimensions; as a result, we cannot know them with our material and limited means. Since we have a material body, we are more acquainted and connected with material affairs. But there are desires within us that cannot be fulfilled except

through immaterial means, and this points to the existence of our human or immaterial dimension.

How to Find out the Characteristics of the Hereafter

In the previous lessons, we learned that the relationship between the hereafter and this world is like the relationship between the world and the mother's womb. Meanwhile, the structure of the world is based on precise mathematical principles; therefore, to describe and understand the characteristics of the hereafter, it is sufficient to recognize and understand the characteristics and capacities of the mother's womb and the behavior of the fetus in that environment. We should know that the deeds and behaviors of the fetus in the mother's womb can be equivalent to what happens in the womb of the world in relation to the hereafter. In fact, by knowing these very principles, we can become aware of the characteristics of the hereafter, which we could not understand before.

Knowing some rules and seeing the existence of some desires and tendencies within us ensure that we have come from the realm of the hereafter to this world, just like someone who knows that he lived in his mother's womb for nine months, but he is unable to describe its characteristics. In fact, he has certain qualities that cannot be acquired except through being in the mother's womb, so he is assured that he has spent a specific period in that place. Surely, when we see a child with chocolate smeared all over his hands and face, who tries to take the remaining chocolate from us, it is not difficult to conclude that he has eaten some chocolate before. In the same way, through the existence of desires such as seeking infinity which are not fulfilled in the limited world of matter, we not only become certain

that there is a hereafter, but we also know that our human dimension has previously been a part of that realm.

The life of the fetus in the mother's womb and his relationship with this world opens different doors to the characteristics of the hereafter. Some of these characteristics are specific to the definition of the hereafter, some refer to the relationship between the hereafter and the world, and some are necessities for a comfortable life in the hereafter.

The Characteristics of the Hereafter in Relation to the World

The mother's womb is a very small space surrounded by the world, and for this reason, it has a very short temporal distance from the world. In fact, the distance from the womb to the world is only as much as a birth. After that, the fetus is entirely separated from the womb, and all his growth and nourishment tools in the womb lose their value and credibility. Entering the world, the fetus only uses the tools that he has made for living in the new environment and are suitable for the living conditions of the world. The world, which is the *Malakut* (celestial kingdom) of the fetus, surrounds the womb, and provides all the energy, strength, and nourishment needed by the fetus; therefore, if the mother dies and the fetus loses his connection with the world, his life is severely endangered and is put in an emergency situation.

In fact, the world sends a very small part of itself (the sperm cell) into the womb. This small component combines with the egg cell (which is itself a part of the world) in the womb and gradually forms a fetus, who after going through the stages of growth, returns to the world and lives a more advanced life there. The fetus

continuously tries to develop, grow, and take shape in the mother's womb, and this does not stop. Ultimately, whatever has happened to the fetus during his lifetime in the womb becomes evident after he enters the world. Now the fetus cannot conceal the process of tool-making or the quality of his life in the womb. In fact, as soon as the fetus enters the world, he will be judged; if he is not in harmony with the conditions of the world, he will experience illness, defects, suffering, sorrow, and regret.

The Hereafter that Is Defined through the World

By understanding the relationship between the mother's womb and the world and between the world and the hereafter, and through establishing correspondence between these two proportions, we can easily comprehend some of the characteristics of the hereafter. Actually, the world is like a very small womb in relation to the hereafter, and it is surrounded by the hereafter. In fact, we are currently in the hereafter as well. Our transition to the hereafter does not have a specific time, and at any moment, we may die and be transferred to the realm that encompasses the world. Upon entering the hereafter, our access to the womb of the world, which has an incredible potential for development and constructive capability, is cut off. In addition, we lose access to the faculties of sense perception, imagination, estimation, and intellect, which were once the tools of our growth and nourishment in the womb of the world. In reality, all worldly conventions lose their value, and only the things which are beneficial for the hereafter and compatible with the living conditions of that realm remain for us. To better understand this issue, we can imagine a person who has immigrated to another country. His

properties, knowledge in various fields, and credibility in his home country will be usable in the new country only when they are presented and used in the new language and are according to the conditions and laws of the destination country; otherwise, none of them will have any value or credibility.

Another characteristic of the hereafter is that it has encompassed the world: It is the *Malakut* of the world. All interactions in the world, whatever happens here, and all its required forces, moves, and energies are conducted through the realm of *Barzakh* and the hereafter. Just as without the world, there would be no mother to have a fetus in her womb, without the hereafter, there would be no world at all. Our soul is sent to the womb of the world as a part of the realm of the hereafter. In the mother's womb, it acquires the necessary tools for life in the material world and then enters the world, so that he can continuously grow and develop, using the constructive capability of this environment. In this way, he makes the necessary tools for an unlimited life in the hereafter, and afterwards, he returns to the realm of the hereafter to live his eternal life. Whatever happens to a human being within the womb of the world is manifested upon his entering the hereafter and is assessed by the criteria and scales of the hereafter. Witnessing what he has brought with himself and the form and structure that he has made for himself through his deeds and assets, he cannot deny anything.

The Definition and Description of the Hereafter

The fetus within the mother's womb is like a person who is born blind, deaf, and dumb and does not have a proper and complete understanding of the world in which he exists. The fetus is confined in the small, narrow, and dark environment

of the womb, inside a sac filled with amniotic fluid, with only a placenta and umbilical cord as his tools and resources. He spends nine months in the mother's womb, which is insignificant in comparison to the time he will spend in the world. He has no understanding of the beauty of the sky at sunset, and the beautiful colors, shapes, and sounds around him evoke no emotions in him. He assesses everything by the standards and scales that he has and sees in the womb. This is while he is going to face a much more enormous, magnificent, and beautiful world that is incomparable to the mother's womb in terms of characteristics and resources.

Similarly, while living in this world, we have no understanding of the greatness, vastness, and characteristics of the hereafter. We only know that based on the proportion between the womb and the world, the realm of the hereafter is billions of times larger and vaster than the world we live in, and it has extremely more advanced resources and tools. Our short limited lifetime in this world is incomparable to the eternal and everlasting life that awaits us in the hereafter.

In fact, the realm of the hereafter is a real realm that requires tools, resources, and assets appropriate to its living conditions. Our inputs and outputs are judged precisely, decisively, and immediately upon entering the hereafter realm, and the problems that we carry with us from this world manifest themselves as defects, pain, illness, or even extra organs in the hereafter. The hereafter is the realm of actualization; it has a limited capability for construction and making up for defects and disorders. In that realm, we can only use the tools that are compatible with the structure and characteristics of the hereafter. If we do not take the appropriate tools with us, the greater vastness, advancement, and completeness of the realm

of the hereafter will not benefit us; instead, it will cause us more poverty, regret, and hardship. It is just like the situation of a student who wants to study in a school for gifted students. Although this school has numerous and advanced facilities, entering it is of no benefit to him, but rather, it creates a sense of disappointment, distress, and frustration in him.

To understand the greatness of the hereafter, it is enough to know that the love and mercy which exist in the world is only one percent of God's mercy, while the hereafter is a realm that is run by ninety-nine percent of God's mercy. Therefore, the kindness, love, affection, intimacy, and friendship that exist in the hereafter are ninety-nine times greater than what exists in the whole world. Of course, this difference is not only related to love, but also to *Barzakh* and the hereafter which are billions of times greater and more amazing or more painful and agonizing than their equivalents in this world.

Necessities for a Comfortable Life in the Hereafter

Now that we are almost familiar with the features and characteristics of the hereafter, it is important to know the necessities for a comfortable life there. In other words, how must we behave in the womb of this world to avoid suffering and punishment in the hereafter, and can we make use of the maximum resources and characteristics of the hereafter?

Just as our health at the time of birth depends on acquiring the proper tools in the mother's womb for worldly life and on receiving adequate nutrition, our healthy birth into the hereafter also depends on the appropriate nourishment of the soul in this world. In reality, having a powerful hereafter is not possible without building

a powerful world, and we must be able to use the world and its assets to build our hereafter.

In order to keep himself healthy and achieve his goals, a fetus must be able to manage two things effectively: First, he must absorb the best nutrients from the womb environment, and second, he must dedicate a small part of this absorption to his womb life and the rest to his worldly life. In fact, if the fetus fails to do so, he puts his own health at risk and may even endanger his survival. For example, if the fetus receives an excessive amount of blood from the placenta inside the womb, or if he allocates an insufficient amount of nutrients for making organs for his worldly life, he may be aborted or have birth defects and disabilities in the world.

Exactly the same thing can also happen to us in the world and in relation to the hereafter; that is, if we cannot establish a balance between our worldly life, its needs, and perfections on the one hand, and the needs of our eternal life in the hereafter on the other hand, we will definitely fail. We will succeed only if we use our worldly assets and resources as much as we need and try to equip ourselves as much as possible with the tools necessary for our life in the hereafter.

Other Necessities for Having a Successful Hereafter

Of course, simply managing the assets is not enough for a fetus; in order to succeed in both his fetal life and equipping himself for the world, the fetus needs to settle in a safe and harmless place, which is called the “secure depository.” We too need to have a secure path in our journey to the hereafter. That is, we must arrange our decisions, relationships, thoughts, behaviors, and lifestyle in a way that they do not harm what our human dimension receives. Otherwise, even if we are eager to grow

spiritually, we will not be successful because if we do not know our "secure depository" and the purpose of our creation, we will waste our talents on a wrong path which will not lead us to the status that has been considered for us.

In this article, we stated that since we have no understanding of the characteristics of the hereafter, we can only know them through similes and comparisons. We attempted to comprehend the characteristics of the hereafter as much as possible through examining the relationship between the mother's womb and the world, and the womb of the world and the hereafter. We understood that the Law of Proportion clarifies the description of the hereafter, the characteristics of the hereafter in relation to the world, and the necessities for having a comfortable life in the hereafter. We have separately addressed each of these relationships in the series of articles about proportion.

If by thinking about the relationship between the mother's womb, the world, and the realm of the hereafter, you can get further insights into other characteristics of the hereafter, we would be glad if you share your thoughts with us in the comments section.